

THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 1883

THE SCOTCH UNIVERSITIES BILL

THE long expected Scotch Universities Bill has at last made its appearance. As no explanation of its provisions has yet been offered in Parliament, and the Scotch newspapers have shown the caution characteristic of their country in declining to commit themselves to an opinion about it till they learn what its authors have to say in its favour, it may be interesting to our readers to know what the Bill proposes to do and how it proposes to do it. So much at least can be stated in a few sentences. The Scotch Universities derive a considerable portion of their revenues from Parliamentary grants. The Bill proposes to give them a sum which is estimated at about 8000*l.* a year, or 25 per cent., more than they now get; to remove the whole of their payment from public moneys from the annual estimates to the Consolidated Fund; to settle this sum of 40,000*l.* on them "in full discharge of all claims past, present, and future," and to cut them adrift. They now get really about 28,000*l.* annually, the other 4000*l.* going to two institutions—the Royal Observatory in Edinburgh, and the Botanic Garden there, which are in future to be handed over to the University of Edinburgh and to be maintained by it out of the portion of the 40,000*l.* to be allocated to it. The allocation of this sum as between the Universities is to be made once and for ever by a new Executive Commission, with whose judgment, except in the form of a somewhat complicated and expensive appeal to Her Majesty in Council and the usual formal laying of their ordinances on the table of Parliament, the State will not farther concern itself.

The second main provision of the Bill is that these Commissioners are directed to make ordinances, subject only to the same appeal, regulating everything in or concerning these Universities, and in particular fixing anew the *constitution* and functions of all the various University bodies and officers, such as the University Court, the University Council, the *Senatus Academicus*, the chancellor, the rector, the assessors, and all other University officers. They are directed in only two particulars. They are to institute a first examination which is to be compulsory on all persons who intend to graduate in Arts or in any other Faculty, and to institute if they think fit, in any or all of the Universities, a new Faculty of Science, subject to these particular directions: they are to "regulate the manner and conditions in and under which students shall be admitted, the course of study and manner of teaching, the amount and exaction of fees, the length of the academical session or sessions, and the manner of examination."

The next important duty imposed on the Commissioners is to report within twelve months whether in their opinion it is no longer possible for the University of St. Andrews, which is the oldest and by far the least numerous attended of the four, "in consequence of the want of sufficient endowments," to "continue to perform its functions with advantage," and in the event of their so reporting they are to make "suggestions for dissolving that University and its Colleges, and creating a new corporation to which the funds and property of the University and Colleges shall be transferred."

VOL. XXVII.—NO. 703

There is another curious provision, which we mention only from the interest which will generally attach to it, not because we should venture in this place to express any opinion about it, in one way or another. Like all the Universities in the kingdom, except London and the new Victoria University, the Scotch Universities have a Faculty of Theology. This has been hitherto in direct connection with the Scotch Established Church, and the Professorships can only be held by clergymen of that Church. It is well known that the Nonconformist denominations in Scotland prescribe a professional course of their own for students preparing for their ministry, and the two great Presbyterian nonconforming bodies have each of them Colleges and Professors, whose lectures their students must attend. The Bill provides that from this time forward no test of any kind shall be applicable to the University Chairs of Theology, which may therefore either be held by clergymen of any persuasion or by laymen. Should this provision become law, it will be most interesting to watch what may be the tendencies and character of the new scientific theology which will develop itself in Scotland after it has been freed from the trammels of any creed. It is to be feared, indeed, that the first effect may be that the students who now attend the University Chairs of Theology may be directed elsewhere to new Colleges or Halls of Presbyterian theology taught from the point of view of the Established Church, and that the rising clergymen of the nation, who are generally of opinion that they do enough when they do all that their licensing bodies require of them, may not sit in great numbers at the feet of the occupants of the new scientific Chairs. There is another provision which illustrates in a singular way the jealousy with which a lay State can scarcely help regarding theology, even after it has become scientific, and "in the abstract." Whatever happens, whoever may benefit by the 25 per cent. of increased emolument to be made over to the Scotch Universities, it is expressly provided that the scientific theologians are never to get any of it.

The most interesting question to our readers is how the new Bill will influence the progress of science in the Scotch Universities. The obvious and only answer is that nobody can tell. The Commissioners may make provision for a Faculty of Science, and in the three younger and more numerous attended Universities they will probably do so. In Edinburgh they could certainly do so without requiring to create new Chairs. In Glasgow there is not at present a Chair of Geology, though that subject is taught in an old-fashioned alliance with zoology, by the single Professor of Natural History. There is no Professor of Geology or of Astronomy or of Engineering in Aberdeen. The foundation of new Chairs on these subjects may possibly be thought necessary before a Faculty of Science is instituted; and there are medical Chairs, like that for Pathological Anatomy, which are not established in Glasgow. A great deal will depend, in fact, on the extent to which the free balance of 7500*l.* or thereabouts may be found sufficient to meet the more urgent and immediate demands which will be made on it from all quarters. Glasgow and Aberdeen have no Chair of Modern History. In Aberdeen one Professor teaches English Literature and Logic, and there is no Chair of Political Economy. In the University of Adam Smith

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Political Economy is only taught by the incumbent of the Chair of Moral Philosophy. The recommendations of the Inquiry Commissioners stated urgent wants of the Universities five years ago which would amount to much more than the added 25 per cent. now to be given to the Commissioners to settle upon the Universities for ever. It is true that Scotland is now both a rich and a liberal country, and that much may be expected in future from the direct contributions of her people. But experience has abundantly shown that private benevolence is never organised benevolence, and that sums which might in the aggregate be sufficient to meet all the most urgent wants of the Universities are not to be expected to be provided by voluntary contributions where or when they are most wanted. To reorganise the Scotch Universities, a liberal provision of public money is probably necessary, and it seems strange to throw the burden of such a provision on a fixed and moderate sum, which is declared to be for ever incapable of increase. It is not for us of course to consider whether Parliament would act wisely in placing the grants for the Scotch Universities on the annual estimates, where they are always open to comparison and challenge, or on the Consolidated Fund, where they are practically liable neither to increase nor to diminution. But it seems a strange policy to declare beforehand that the grants for objects which are admitted to be of national importance shall never exceed a severely limited sum. The demands of science alone are continually increasing in pecuniary severity, and we say no more than every one will admit when we add, that it is not for the public advantage that the natural teaching of science should be hindered in any of the three kingdoms by a too rigid or mechanical economy. It is not placing her in her true position to compel her to an undignified struggle with a host of other claimants for her fair share of a moderate allowance which cannot be increased. If the Scotch Universities had great College estates and ample revenues like Oxford and Cambridge, her claims might be met from time to time as they have been in England. Until of late years they have been very moderately provided institutions, and there are no available funds for the extensions of the future but the freewill offerings of her people. The State is, in our opinion, reasonably expected from time to time to organise, or to help to reorganise them in the interests of the nation. We should like to see it ready to do something more in that way than to offer to cut them adrift with a little extra money, and to provide Commissioners to whose absolute discretion is to be intrusted the reconstructive duties which naturally devolve on Parliament. The Oxford and Cambridge Act of 1877 gave the Commissioners then appointed very extensive powers, but it was in marked contrast, in the precision and fulness of its enacting clauses, and in the checks under which the Commissioners were to exercise their functions, to the Scotch Universities Bill of 1883.

*THE SCHEME OF THE GROCERS' COMPANY
FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF ORIGINAL
RESEARCH IN SANITARY SCIENCE*

THE relation of man, whether savage or civilised, to his surroundings is one of constant exposure to influences which are hostile to his bodily well-being.

Some of these are dangerous chiefly by reason of their insidiousness; others, although not concealed, are in their nature unavoidable; others, though both known and avoidable, are yet for various reasons not avoided. All of them, of whichever class, are subjects of earnest study to the pathologist, one part of whose science is for this reason called etiology as relating to the *causes of disease*, the other being concerned with the disturbances which these causes induce inside the living human organism. "Sanitary Science" in so far as it is a science, is identical with etiology, and is therefore a branch of pathology. In this sense it is the science on which the art of preventing disease, or "Preventive Medicine," as it is commonly called, is founded, and it will be admitted that, whatever doubt may exist as to the utility of exact knowledge of the nature of disease for its cure, there can be none as to its direct applicability to prevention.

The Grocers' Company, one of the oldest and most distinguished of the City Guilds and second to none in the liberality with which it has always bestowed its funds for the general good, has thought fit to create an endowment, or rather a system of endowments, for the encouragement of "Original Research in Sanitary Science." This it defines as relating to the "causes of important diseases and the means by which the respective causes may be prevented or obviated." The endowments which the Company have created are of two kinds. The one is intended "as maintenance for work in progress in fields of research to be chosen by the worker," the other as reward for actual discovery; the former intention being carried into effect by the establishment of three "Research Scholarships," each of 250*l.* a year, the latter by the appointment of a "Discovery Prize" of 1000*l.*, to be given once in every four years. With a special view to the promotion of pathological study in the United Kingdom and its dependencies, the Scholarships are limited to British subjects who must be under thirty-five years of age; but in all other respects they are entirely open to persons *cujuscunque ordinis sive professionis*. Candidates are expected to state precisely the researches they propose to undertake, and are invited to refer, in support of their applications, to any work they may have in progress or may have published in the same or in any kindred field of study. In the appointment to Scholarships preference will be given to those candidates whose researches are judged likely to result in increase of knowledge of the "*Causation or Preventability of some important Disease or Diseases*." It is further provided that towards the close of his year of scholarship each scholar shall publish the result of his research or researches either in print, or, if desired, in a lecture to be delivered at Grocers' Hall or elsewhere.

The Quadrennial Discovery Prize is intended to reward original investigations, irrespectively of the country in which they may have been made, which shall have resulted in important additions to exact knowledge in particular (previously defined) subjects. The subject for the first Discovery Prize will be announced in May next, and the award will be made in May, 1887, when a further subject for investigation will be proposed. Any treatise which the candidate may have published, whether in England or in any other country, at any time during the period allowed, will be accepted as a competition-treatise,